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Produce wholesaler J&J Distributing of St. Paul makes 400 deliveries a day to nearly every grocer you can name in the Twin Cities area, dropping off everything from pineapples to potatoes.

Next spring, if everything goes according to plan, it may deliver a crop that was grown through green energy measures funded by the federal stimulus package - jobs, roughly 100 to 150 of them.

The 32-year-old Rice Street company was the first to sign up for a \$1.3 million energy package of conservation loans and rebates authorized by the St. Paul Port Authority's new "Trillion BTU Fund."

The fund was the product of efforts to save the Rock-Tenn paper-recycling facility in St. Paul's Midway area when it was in danger of closing. Energy retrofits funded by the Port Authority led to the idea of creating a fund as a revolving loan program that could help companies pay for energy-saving measures that would allow them to save money and grow.

The money comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and for J&J, it will pay for new energy-efficient lighting and installation of three energy-efficient climate-control systems to replace 44 rooftop refrigeration units.

The company will use part of the money saved from the efficiency measures to pay back the loan in seven years.

It will use the rest to expand. The city of St. Paul is contributing \$1.5 million to help build a 20,000-square-foot addition to the nearly 100,000-square-foot refrigerated concrete-block facility on Rice Street. The addition will include a state-of-the-art cutting room where J&J can make more fruit plates for supermarket deli cases, a labor-intensive job that requires people, not machines.

"The best machine is a good worker," J&J CEO Jim Hannigan said. "When it comes to processing work, it creates jobs."

Finally, J&J will use \$500,000 funded by the city's Community Development Block Grant Recovery Act to build a greenhouse on site that is expected to produce hothouse tomatoes and other produce year-round.

The addition is expected to reduce the firm's greenhouse gas production by creating an urban farm that reduces the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables trucked halfway across the country, Hannigan said.

Up to 80 percent of the energy J&J uses is transportation fuel for the big rigs that deliver the produce, he said. Fruits and vegetables travel an average of 1,500 miles before hitting supermarket shelves, he said.

Hannigan's \$65 million, 240-employee business was at capacity and trying to figure out how to grow when he found out about the Trillion BTU program.

"For a company like ours, this is a phenomenal return on investment," he said.

The promise of growing jobs brought out political office-holders to a ceremonial "fruit cutting" at the facility Friday.

U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken, U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, who represents St. Paul, and St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman shared a dais, joked about the cold weather and lauded the stimulus aid.

"This is not just about saving energy," Klobuchar said, "this is about jobs."